

# Methods of Historical Research

## **HIST 4301**

Spring 2024

Th 6:00 — 8:45 pm

Classroom Hall 307

## **Dr. Elizabeth Hasseler**

[ehasseler@tamusa.edu](mailto:ehasseler@tamusa.edu)

## **Office Hours**

Mon., 2:30—3:30

And by appointment

## Course Description

HIST 4301 teaches methods of historical research and writing. The course is structured around the development of an original historical research project: you will define a research topic, conduct original research using primary and secondary sources, and develop a thesis and conclusions, which you will support in a research paper and oral presentation.

## Learning Objectives

In this course, you will learn how to:

1. Develop a research plan;
2. Conduct historical research in archives, special collections, and library holdings and databases;
3. Critically evaluate primary historical sources;
4. Compose an extended piece of historical writing;
5. Present research findings.

## Grade Breakdown

- 20% Participation
- 35% Research Paper
- 30% Research Presentation
- 5% Topic Proposal
- 5% Draft Bibliography
- 5% Draft Thesis Statement
- 5% Partial Paper Draft



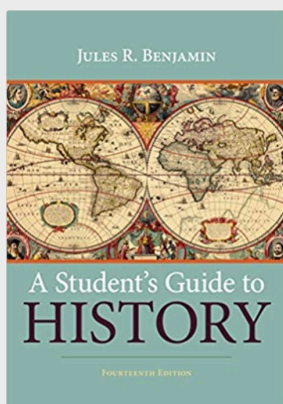
## Participation Assignments

### Journal Entries

Your Journal is a private space for you to share your thoughts about your research project. Only you and Dr. Hassler can view your Journal entries. There won't be a Journal entry assigned every week—once the semester is going, we'll touch base in your Journal occasionally. **Journal entries are always due on Sunday by 11:59 pm.**

### In-Class Discussion

The core of your participation will take place during class on Wednesdays. In the classroom, we will discuss the weekly topic, practice research and writing skills in workshops, and engage in guided writing sessions. **You should always be sure to read the assigned readings for the week by the time you come to class on Wednesday.**



## Course Text

There is only one assigned text for this course. Be sure to purchase the correct edition.

**Jules R. Benjamin, *A Student's Guide to History* (14th Edition)**

All additional readings will be posted to Blackboard.

# Written Assignments

Detailed instructions will be provided for each assignment on Blackboard. All assignments are due on Blackboard by **11:59 pm on the Sunday of the week in which they are assigned.**

## Topic Proposal

In week 2, you will submit your early ideas about your research topic, including a preliminary research question. **Dr. Hasseler will provide you with feedback about the feasibility and appropriateness of your proposed research topic and may ask you to revise it.**

## Bibliography Draft

In week 5, you will submit a draft of your bibliography for feedback.

## Thesis Statement

In week 7, you will submit a draft of your research paper's thesis statement for feedback.

## Partial Draft

In week 8, you will submit a partial draft (5 pages minimum) of your research paper for feedback.

## Research Paper

Your final research paper must be a minimum 20 pages in length, adhering to all formatting specifications (the cover page and bibliography do not count towards the page minimum).

## Research Presentation

Your research presentation should be 15 minutes long and utilize visual presentation aides (slides or a handout).

# Course Policies

## Missing Class

I work to be understanding about your responsibilities outside the classroom: I know that you likely have jobs, family obligations, etc. that you have to prioritize alongside your schoolwork. Nevertheless, it will be difficult to be successful in the class if you have multiple absences. **You should always contact me as far as possible in advance if you are going to miss a class so we can discuss potential accommodations.** If you are regularly absent, I will be in contact to discuss your future progress in the course and potential withdrawal.

## Late Work

The assignments for this course are iterative, meaning that they build on one another. You will not be able to produce a complete research paper or presentation without first having completed your topic proposal, thesis statement, etc. It is even more important than in a non-project based course that you meet deadlines. **If you expect that you will not be able to finish an assignment by the due date, contact me to discuss your situation.**

I will not accept late work in the absence of any communication.

## Plagiarism

Plagiarism is not an innocent form of cheating — it is a serious act of academic misconduct. I will be rigorously checking all work for signs of plagiarism. **If you are caught having committed plagiarism at any point, you will receive a failing grade in the course and I will submit an academic misconduct report to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities.** It is your responsibility to know what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it at. Resources are readily available through me, the library, and the internet if you are ever unsure.

## Generative AI Policy

Unless otherwise specified, the use of automated writing tools, including language-learning model AIs such as **ChatGPT**, is **strictly prohibited** in this course. The use of automated writing tools is considered plagiarism and will be handled in accordance with the above policy.

# Course Schedule

## Week 1: January 16 – 21

Welcome to Methods of Historical Research

**Reading:** Benjamin, Chapter 1

**Assignments due:** Journal Entry

## Week 2: January 22 – 28

Introduction to Historical Research

**Reading:** Benjamin, Chapter 7; Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams, “From Questions to Topics,” from *The Craft of Research*

**Assignments Due:** Topic Proposal

## Week 3: January 29 – February 4

Gathering Your Sources: Library Resources, Archives, and Special Collections

**Assignments Due:** Journal Entry

## Week 4: February 5 – 11

Working with Historical Sources

**Reading:** Benjamin, Chapters 3, 4

## Week 5: February 12 – 18

Citations, Bibliographies, and Plagiarism

**Reading:** Benjamin, Chapter 10: Documenting Your Paper

**Assignments Due:** Draft Bibliography

## Week 6: February 19 – 25

The Writing Process & Structuring the Research Paper

**Reading:** Benjamin, Chapter 6; Booth, Colomb, and Williams, “Introductions and Conclusions,” from *The Craft of Research*

**Assignments Due:** Journal Entry

## Week 7: February 26 – March 3

Historical Argumentation

**Reading:** Booth, Colomb, and Williams, “Making Good Arguments: An Overview,” from *The Craft of Research*

**Assignments Due:** Draft Thesis Statement

## Week 8: March 4 – 10

No Class: Individual Meetings

**Assignment Due:** Partial Rough Draft

## Week 9: March 11 – 17

**Spring Break**

## Week 10: March 18 – 24

Writing Workshop

## Week 11: March 25 – 31

No Class: Writing Time

Week 12: April 1 – 7

The Art of Presenting

**Reading:** “A Short Guide to Presentation Skills”

**Assignments Due:** Journal Entry

Week 13: April 8 – 14

No Class: Writing Time

Week 14: April 15 – 21

Research Presentations, Round 1

Week 15: April 22 – 28

Research Presentations, Round 2

Finals: May 1 – 7

**Research Paper due:** Monday, May 6 by 11:59 pm